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To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Regarding the Dept of Justice settlement and the appeal put forth by a number of states to further punish and limit the company, I wish to say that these efforts to control Microsoft will nothing to help the individual end user.

I have been using computers to perform my occupation and personal responsibilities for the past 20 years. I am not literate in computer technology but consider myself reasonably competent in using software for word-processing, spreadsheet, and database applications. I remember beginning with DOS and working with WordPerfect, Lotus, Quattro, etc. Attempting to integrate operating systems and software, no matter whose, was always a frustrating and non-productive process. I never want to return to that situation again. Frankly, I still spend too much of my time trying to make hardware, software and operating systems compliant with each other. Innovation is a dirty concept when it means frustration, wasted time, and in the end a soup of diverse components that don't work together on my machine much less work with other users. This is what we face if the states persist in their attempt to punish and ultimately limit Microsoft. I would much prefer seeing Microsoft being held accountable for compatibility issues with their operating system and the multiple software and hardware applications that require it.

It seems to me that in real dollars the cost of computing has come down exponentially in the twenty years I have been doing this. We must owe something to Microsoft, Intel, IBM and a number of others. Left to its own elitist approach (disguised as an advocate for the common man, remember the Ridley Scott commercial during the Super Bowl), Macintosh would cost thousands of dollars more today. In my first attempts at computing, I bought DOS and an IBM-based system, simply because it cost half as much as Macintosh. Back then DOS and the Intel-IBM configuration were not equal to Macintosh, but the cost of the latter was prohibitive for many of us.

Oracle and Sun are doing just fine, thank you. They've never approached the individual end user to provide a product. If allowed to foul up the current computing environment, these companies will price millions of us out of computing, just as Macintosh did. The Internet would remain a perk for academics and industry. Please don't kill the goose. Make Microsoft even more responsive to end users.

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